

LOWER MERION LILIES

other

POEMS

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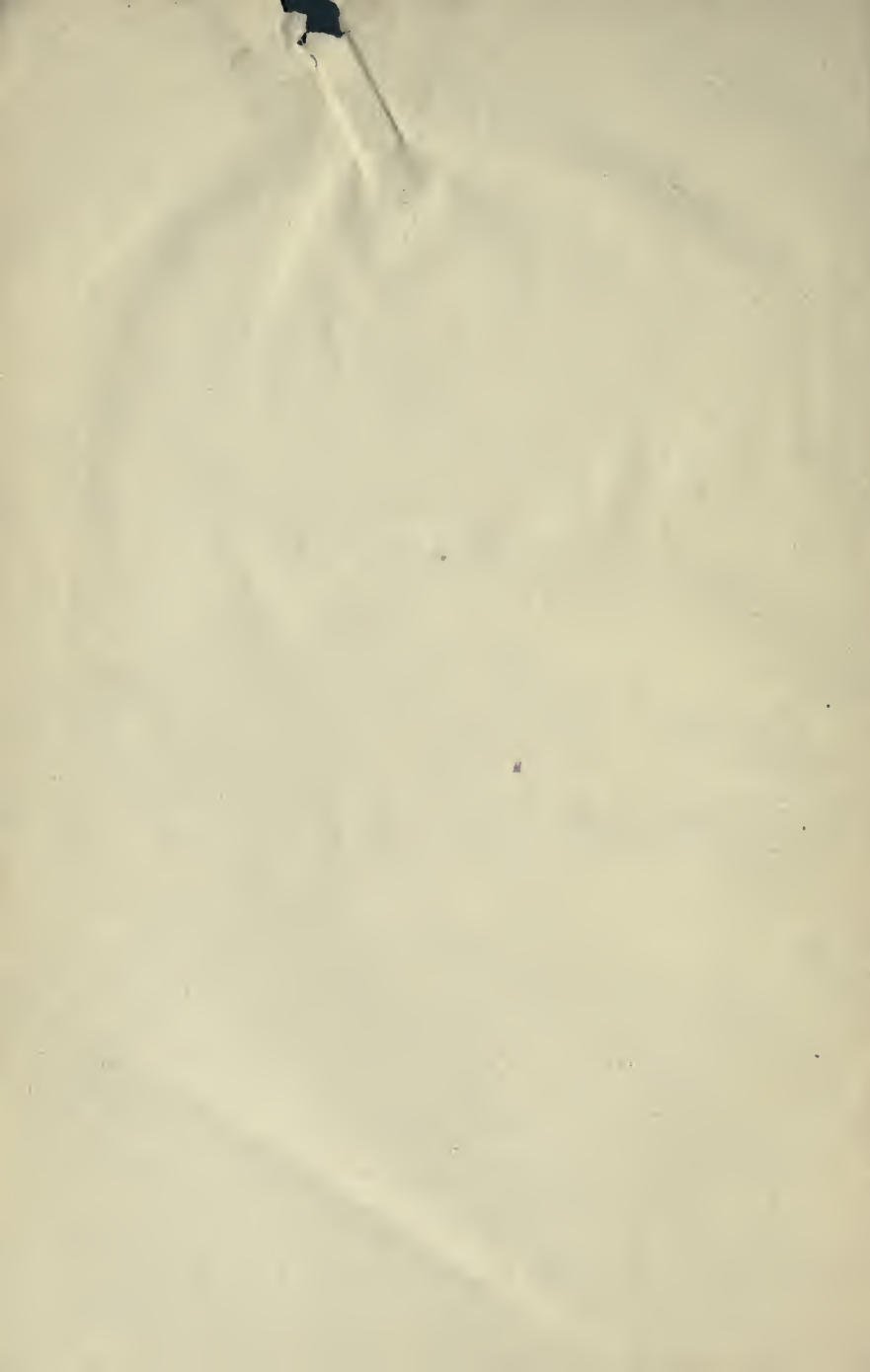
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LOWER MERION LILIES

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

MARGARET B. HARVEY.



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1887.

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TO MY FRIEND

DR. HENRY L. CURTIS.



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LOWER MERION LILIES.

SWEET, how do you think of a lily?—

A vase of frosty light?

My child, it is oftentimes silly

To call a lily white.

Oh, yes!—'tis the popular fashion

With those who do not know,

To speak of the red rose of passion,

The lily, pure as snow.

But which of your fair friends supposes

That lilies white are rare?

And what of red lilies, white roses?

Their numbers well compare.

Red lilies and roses are plenty,

White lilies, roses, few;

But scarcely one woman in twenty
Can tell what I tell you.

The lily is purity's token?
Red makes her no less so;
The rose failed—that's why she's heart-broken—
To rival lily's glow.
The ardent are always the purest—
Can ice to sun aspire?
For soul's burning life, symbols surest
Are lilies, love and fire!

The wild-rose, a sweet child of nature,
Is modest as a maid;
The fields suit the shy little creature,
And there she should have stayed.
Poor rose,—how men take her and bend her
To fashion's false caprice!
The lily, unmarred in her splendor,
Holds lamps whose flames ne'er cease!

I see you can scarcely believe me—
But, still, I'm in the right;
Nor does my quick fancy deceive me—
I can convince your sight:
So come,—we'll explore, like flower-lovers,
The region of my birth,
The garden of all the flag covers,
The Paradise of earth!

Her hills rise sublime to the ether,
As queen, with star-gems crowned;
Her forests unshorn fall beneath her,
As purple veil sweeps ground;
The tinsel-thread creeks, fields flower-dotted,
Form gay, embroidered vest:
The Schuylkill his silver has knotted
Like girdle round her breast.

Dear hills—'tis the near Quaker City,
Which I from you discern—

Ravines, with your lesson, I pity
That soul who cannot learn:
For Zion stands there, at sight's ending!—
These hills are where Christ trod;
This land, wild and fertile, rare blending,
Is sacred hence to God!

I know by the lilies which border
The streams in every vale;
They stand, in their sun-burning order,
To tell the wondrous tale;
Each one like the candlestick olden
Which shone in holy place;
And all like the hosts whose harps golden
Resound through heav'nly space!

My dear, you believe me rhapsodic—
You see but yellow-red—
My verse, I admit, is spasmodic,
But wait till all is said;

Yet stay—why should ladies hate freckles
To dot their vermeil cheeks?
The lily, superb, not the speckles
Can mar—you know Who speaks!

Perhaps our soul-spots are our natures,
As much as color clear;
For these He will never His creatures
Hold one whit less the dear.
'Tis not the flower, blank as white paper,
Which He to us commends,
But one, every petal a taper
To burn till flower-life ends.

The lilies of sweet, sacred story,
Blaze gold-and-coral flame—
Our lilies are equal in glory—
Our lilies are the same!
Then, He through our hills, valley-broken,
As in that land hath trod,



And marked with an altar-coal token
The touch of our one God!

Hush, heart!—for I feel the place holy!—
Each calyx bears to me
A message from Him!—Oh, how lowly
A prophet-soul should be!
Our lilies, as those, are revealing
A balm for earthly ills;
And I can send good news of healing
From my ancestral hills!

Of course, you have read the whole writing,
But, did you read aright?
My friend, it is profitless fighting,
Unknowing what to fight.
Forget all the tiresome abstraction
In current, Christian speech,
And learn, to your own satisfaction,
What lilies really teach.

The Manayunk factories below us
Send up from each tall stack
Great masses of smoke, just to show us
How black is hell's own black;
Doth He, 'mid the lilies low bending,
Hear not the toilers' moans;
Nor see Moloch-flames high ascending
From children's burning bones?

Cursed spot! here the heart of a mother
Like thirsty vampire grows,
Drains life from a child—any other
Existence neither knows.
Your taint, o'er our cloud-forests hilly
Would float, with smoke and grime—
But we, with our antidote-lily,
Defy you for all time!

We call to your slaves—cross the river
And drink of love divine;

The lily-cups gleam, all a-quiver,
Like sacramental wine;
Let beauty dwell with you, as angel,
Let toil have shortened days,—
For this is the lily's evangel
Turned into modern phrase.

Let every poor child,—every woman
Claim grace and ease as dower;
Are these things too choice for a human,
And not for soulless flower?
All bodies are meet for adorning—
The Holy Spirit's shrines;
What hand should be toil-worn at morning,
And cold when noonday shines?

And men—why should work be a passion?
They rush, but will not see;
To-day, it is too much the fashion
To *do*, instead of *be*;

Far better do naught than good illy—
The strong soul *is*—at rest,
Or, grows like the unconscious lily,
I AM—scarce felt—his guest!

Let youth to each lifetime be lengthened,
True stature each attain;
By knowledge let each brain be strengthened,
Each hand hold modest gain.
Shall lilies have full time for blooming,
Fill topaz hearts from sun,
And God's soul-flowers wither, man dooming
To loss each suffering one?

Take lily-jets home to your chamber,
And all your house illumine,
And paint it in scarlet and amber,
Like radiance in the tomb;
Let heart to each heart hence be loyal,
Love gild each common thing,

Your dwelling be evermore royal,
You, children of the King!

New lilies, in each summer's glory,
In this new land, so dear,
In old tell the ever-new story
Whose meaning grows more clear:
So, take all, this bloom incandescent—
Each censer, one word gives,
'Neath stars here, as there 'neath the crescent,
'Tis Love—in God it lives!

DELILAH.

A WOMAN!—but who else would dare?
You nobles, you armies, and all!
You quailed at the might of a hair!
By woman's hand saw your foe fall!

My country, my gods, gave me nerve,
And first taught me politic lie;
My home and my kindred to serve,
Doomed beauty and honor to die!

Great men of my race, if you can,
Rejoice in a victory so won!
Who, then, was your foe? But a man!
To meet him you had not a son!
One daughter, more, less, counts for naught,—
Throw out but her heart for a bait!
Who asks, when the lion is caught,
How costly the morsel he ate?

My story shall hence, lion-told,
Through ages and ages resound;
My image all nations shall hold
As type of deceit most profound;
Yet, those who have blackened my fame
To woman for succor shall trust;

A Lion, their king, shall be Lamb,
And raise man and woman from dust.

But ah! that e'er men Lion-strength
Should seek long to shear, as did you;
Ah, fools! Know they not that at length
The Lion will burst their bonds through?
Man never this Lion can tame!—
But some day the blind world must see
That Lion first showed heart of Lamb
To woman,—a woman like me!

But, first, countless ages shall roll,—
Then that day shall dawn in the west.
'Till then, every woman her soul
Must dwarf at man-master's behest;
Her great thought, her noble desire,
Her possible beautiful deed,
Must barter, mock love-gems the hire,
A man-made-up Lion to feed.

But man-made-up Lions must fall—

Ah! would that these cheats' costly food
Had torn from no woman-heart all

That else had made life grandly good.
The true Lion ever must stand—

He sees but a soul—it is one—
A treasure, whose riches expand,
Owned whether by daughter or son.

Then women shall carry the spear,
In that day, of silver-tipped truth;
And none claim sole right to the clear,
Pure torch-flame of undying youth.
False lions may roar at the gates,—
The silver shall pierce them with fright:
No waste of heart-treasures for baits;
The fire shall put black beasts to flight!

In that day, when woman is crowned
As queen, whom the earth must long wait;

When annals of woman, unbound
From strictures of falsehood and hate;
When woman makes heart, brain unite
To bring back all Eden-joy fled,
Some woman may rise and make white
The fame of a woman long dead!

LUNULA.

A LITTLE girl looks at her fingers,
And just at each petal's base,
As she o'er her scale-practice lingers,
An ivory half-moon can trace.
Forgets she the ivory below them,
The black keys are also dumb;
These crescents,—why, she did not know them,
Nor how they had strangely come.

Anatomy was her next study,
She would in the class inquire—
Pearl-sickles, with rose-leaves faint-ruddy,
She found were charms to admire.
Lunula, they called every white arc,
A dear little baby moon!
And *Luna*, you guess, would a bright mark
For maid-fancy flights be soon.

Mythology told her the story
Of *Luna*'s young shepherd-love:
To meet him the Moon left her glory,
Came down from her heights above.
Alas! when we weak woman-creatures
For love's dear sake must descend!—
This girl gave the tale some new features
Just where the books make an end.

They end with a little confusion—
Diana controlled the moon;

But Luna's fate,—what the conclusion?—

Her fault was discovered soon.

True wife, from the heav'nly portal

She went to Endymion's cot,

And, having once wedded a mortal,

Accepted her lowly lot.

And he,—did he know any better

Than many a man to-day,

That he to that fair one was debtor,

Who came to his house to stay?

Ah! many a woman her splendor

Has dimmed for the one loved best,

He blind to the ministries tender

Of her, his celestial guest!

But Luna had wedded one earth-born,—

Her child had a worldly taint;

A mischievous bent, from her birth-morn,

Marred loveliness fit for saint.

Still—that is our own common history—

A clod, and a fire, the same,—

All mention—who solves the dread mystery?—

Earth-lamps dimming heaven-flame?

Lunula, the beautiful daughter

Of shepherd, oft scanned the sky;

She knew, for her instinct had taught her,

That she was of lineage high.

Blame not, but admire her the rather—

She feels, as her own, the pearl

Of princess,—which no boorish father

Can take from a true-souled girl!

Some poet, a color-blind fellow,

Said moonshine was silvery light;

His followers could not see yellow,—

They thought the first liar right;

(To Satan we down with the rest fall!)

But woman's quick eyes compare!



She knows that her colors ancestral
Flame out in her amber hair.

The moon was a mirror refulgent
In which she could often trace,
With fancy a little indulgent,
A very familiar face.

Of course, you will see, 'twas no other
Than hers, to herself unknown,
But always she thought that her mother
In radiance upon her shone.

“My mother is, then, moon-descended?
Revisits her early home;
But when does she go?—how attended?—
Or when to our cottage come?”
These thoughts were, to say the least, vexing—
The face she again espied
One evening, while, still more perplexing,
Her mother was by her side.

“Moon-born? Yes, that pure, golden beauty
Once fell round me like a cloak;
But I, at the clear call of duty,
Away from its splendor broke.
A woman, high, low, dazzling glitter
Tempts never to slight love’s voice;
Nor, be her lot sweet, be it bitter,
Repent of her own free choice.

“Return to the moon! Daughter, never!
My cousin Diana reigns!
My car she may ride in forever
For me, while my love remains!”
But this did not please the fair maiden,—
Dark purposes on her crowd,
Her heart-rose, with black insects laden,—
The little moon hid in cloud!

This cloud took the form of a giant,—
A vapor makes man full soon!—

Lunula grew fiercely defiant,—
Her mother should have her moon!
You, children of new-fashioned nursing,
Call moon-craving wishes vain;
How oft does the tale need rehearsing
Before you can read it plain?

Are you for a climax preparing?
She promised a vain youth fame—
You know of her great deed of daring,
But never knew whom to blame.
He bears undeserved execration,
That boy, to her purpose found:
Her work was the great conflagration
Which razed the fair fane to ground!

Diana's vast temple in ashes?
Oh, that was stupendous gain!
But, ah! soon her spar teeth she gnashes—
Lunula had toiled in vain!

Alas, for the poor, erring daughter!
Her mother became her foe;
And Luna,—the deed only brought her
Not joy, but the deepest woe:

“Dear Cousin Diana! Hence, never
A half-felt regret shall rise;
I give to you, freely, forever,
My place in the starry skies:
Take this as your just compensation
For all your loss upon earth.”
(Myths dimly predict the salvation
Attendant on every birth!)

“But *my* loss—not easily covered
The lack in my aching heart!
A child-soul, like bird, round me hovered,
Which was of my life a part.
'Tis gone—the fair girl in my dwelling
Is not that pure spirit's shrine;

You lost but a temple—who telling
Could measure a loss like mine?

“Not pillars of marble and granite,
Not statue of breathing stone,
Not rule o’er a heavenly planet,
Not pathway with jewels sown,
Can equal a love unpolluted
By mixture of base desire;
Or heart of a woman transmuted
To flame from an altar-fire!

“Maid-cousin! I once thought a mother
For every deep pang endured,
Herself, as in battle, another
Green victory-palm procured;
I thought every maidenly anguish
Meant only a sure defeat:
Those longest in dying-throes languish
Who bore all the fiercest heat!

“But grief, which seeks solace so vainly,
My being has strangely stirred;
I hear in my deepest soul plainly
A voice with prophetic word:
A maiden, exalted of woman,
Shall bring unto all mankind,
That respite from heart-ills of human
Which sages could never find.

“All maidenhood hence adoration
Shall claim as a rightful dower;
All motherhood find exaltation
In maid, of all women flower.
We mothers, alas! of an angel
See left but a crumbling clod;
A maid is a latent evangel,
A possible shrine of God.

“No child is your constant attendant,
But, then, you have none to fail;

Far better no stars shone resplendent
Than one of them ever pale.
My daughter is possible mother
Of demigod or of clay?
Save her, whether one or the other,
From sorrow like mine to-day!"

Lunula left Luna still weeping,
And, all in a fit of pique,
Went out while the tired world was sleeping,
New chances for sport to seek.
She troubled the dogs, cats, and mad folks,
And frightened the people soon:
In short, she played off all the bad jokes
That ever were blamed on moon.

Since robbing Diana was bootless,
She gave the queen a bad name;
Say not such a purpose was fruitless,—
We all succeed at that game:

We ruin our friend's shrine of beauty,
Are piqued that he does not care,
Heed demons who call it our duty,
And tangle burs in his hair.

That friend may have felt resignation,
And never sought to repair
His temple, but thinks all creation
At league with burs in his hair!
But what can he do?—ah, the pity!
What did one of heav'nly birth?
Her great loss was only a city,
Her small, her good name on earth.

Still wrapped in her mantle of glory
She swept with a mien as proud
As though just as well snake as story
Could creep to celestial cloud.
The world called her blind, deaf, or jealous,
Nor thought she had wounds to hide;

But woman, or moon, men can tell us
Of naught but her public side.

Lunula observed,—this mien haughty
Was more than matter of course;
She realized then she was naughty,
And melted with quick remorse.
Poor creature! she was not the first one
To value rare nectar spilled;
Now, which of us all is the worst one?
We all have our song-birds killed.

A wandering child back to true mother—
Ah, where is a sight so sweet?
Cold earth feels the same when another
Warm spring runs with bloom to greet:
The mother's dead heart flows in rivers
At touch of child's sunny hair;
One blossom-smile rioting quivers
O'er face long of beauty bare.

Oh, faith in our kind had we offer,
What strength we could gain, impart!
Not satin in chestnut is softer
Than white in the roughest heart!
Not hair of a woman is finer
Than trust, after deed abhorred;
Not voice of a woman diviner
Than soul to its height restored!

Lunula was not wicked wholly,
But true in her deepest heart;
Henceforth felt exceedingly lowly,
And acted a faithful part.
Her mother, a moonstone dividing,
The fragments gave her to view
And wear, to save all future chiding,
Remind her of duty, too.

She set for all time the mode followed
In every land upon earth;
c

But Nature has helped her, and hollowed
 Pearl segments for baby's birth.
To us as to her they say, Better
 Be good than win fame or gold.
End—tale which in figure and letter
 A girl from finger-ends told.

TO A KNIGHT.

A FAIRY story,—shall I tell
 The wondrous tale anew?
You fed on elf-lore, I know well,
 As fabled birds on dew,
When yet your cheek, as petals soft,
 Like pink sabbatia bloomed,
Ere heart-wrung drops to dimness oft
 Your eyes' blue gentian doomed.

You know, then, how the spotless knight
The princess in disguise
From mischief-breathing gnomes' fell might
Released, and bade her rise
In regal state, his strong sword trust,
Nor heed her baffled foes,—
As dewdrop pure dissolves the dust
Which dims the royal rose.

Suppose I told the tale anew
Which you, a child, oft craved,
And said the valiant knight were you,
And I the princess saved?
You smile—life's commonplace, you say,
In this prosaic age;
Men throw the fairy ferns away
To gather wheat and sage.

I know you scarce can understand,
Though you may take my word;



Suppose I brought you, in my hand,
A tiny humming-bird?
If I had caught it on the wing
My palm would hold it dead;
And you would see a poor, crushed thing,
But painted green and red.

What could its color say to you
Of life, like darting flame,
Ere from the woodbine's wells of dew
To my death-grasp it came?
But had I not that vision blurred
Of quivering, rainbow light,
How could you know that any bird
Had met my wondering sight?

Believe in light for color's sake,
In light all colors live;
And my imperfect story take
For what it fain would give.

Believe a lily's spar-white urn
Is all your fancy sees,
Nor tear the sepals off to learn
If there lurk treacherous bees.

Then, can you not believe me true
If you I call the knight,
Myself the princess, as anew
The elf-tale I recite?
You bear no lance,—it matters not,—
No century I slept:
That man was knight, whate'er his lot,
Who sighed when woman wept!

That woman justly rates that sigh,
While yet her eyes are wet;
She feels her royal state, so high
By knightly homage set.
Such sighs her tear-filled lids uncloze
As zephyrs, dewy buds;

Each drop like queenly jewel glows,
Which diadem bestuds.

And yet you scarce can comprehend
The story I would tell;
Could you from sun-gilt fields descend
In deep and darksome well?
The dripping prison-walls so high
Would round your vision close;
The sapphire-pearly gleam of sky
Would only mock your woes.

Across the ether-disk might dart
A bird with crescent-wings;
No sign, to your despairing heart,
Of rising home he brings—
Your home, like his, the world of light,
Of color, sweets and flowers,
Of loves, of music, joys of sight,
And rest in sheltering bowers.

You could, in fancy, take such place?—

Then know what fate was mine,
When through my dusk I saw your face
Like orb of morning shine.

I dreamed, perhaps,—your outstretched hand
Was all that I could tell,—
I woke in clover-painted land,
And not in chilling well.

The fragrant billows,—how they rise
And fall, a clover-sea!
You saw them not,—could scarce surmise
How crimson they might be.
What wonder, then, when from the field
I bore you trophies red,
You fancied I the quest would yield,
And roses give instead?

Ah, knight! That was an erring thought!—
My clover you despised,

As though the blushing bloom I brought
Might be a rose disguised;
True, clover sweet, like youth's lip glows,
Floods meadows, hills above,
A clover, still, is no more rose
Than gratitude is love.

But if you erred,—I must believe
You could not read my tale;
Glycine's purple plume at eve
Is like acacia's pale.
How could you pearl and amethyst
Without the daylight see?
Or how a tangled chord untwist
Before you knew the key?

Now, surely, you can take this key
And follow out my theme
Of fairy tale and chivalry,—
Are they, to-day, a dream?

The stream which turns bread-grinding wheels
Still flows as free, as fast,
Still shimmering, nacre-tints reveals
As in the ages past.

The knight of old a guerdon wore,
By lady given him,
Although she oft was little more
Than vision fair but dim:
In misty veil your spirit-eyes
Discern me from afar;
But I, through prayer, can cull a prize
For you,—a heavenly star!

MYRTLE AND WILLOW.

I.

My heart was like an argosy
Within whose roomy hold
Were rare and priceless treasures hid
And gems and glittering gold.
The morn was fair, the sky was clear,
I sent my bark away.
Blithe rose my song, as glad I thought
Of her returning day.
"Oh, swiftly sail, my argosy!
Sail o'er the billowy sea!
And then with richer stores return,
Return again to me!"

My heart was like a treasure-house,
So high, so wide, so deep,

That even I could never tell
How much it had to keep.
I only knew that lower far
Than e'er my touch could reach,
I only knew that higher far
Than measures thought or speech,
Were strange and wondrous riches piled,—
But they confused my sight,
And I, with awe and wonder filled,
Shut out the glaring light.
Again I sang, but now my song,
Like solemn organ's roll,
Flowed out to sea, my argosy
To follow and control.

II.

Closed be thou, heart, I fear me
To know thou art so near me,
Yet holding ever in thy silent deep,
Whether I work or wake or sleep,

Whether I laugh or sigh or weep,
Strange, wondrous things—I cannot tell
Whether they bode me ill or well,
Which of the marvels thou dost hide
May to me joy or grief betide.
Closed be thy doors, let me not know
Either my happiness or woe,
Till shall my argosy return,—
And by its spoils I then shall learn
What is the worth of that rare gold,
House of my treasures, thou dost hold.

III.

Softly the breezes
Whispered to me
News of my vessel,
News from the sea.

And the birds warbled
That they could tell

How fared my vessel,
Fared ill or well.

IV.

Filled are her sails
With spicy gales;
Filled is her hold
With precious gold.
Faster and faster she nears her own land,—
But a new master has taken command.

How his eyes beam,
Chrysolites seem!
Glowing his hair
As topaz rare!
As he has conquered your vessel so true,
So, when he's anchored, will he vanquish you.

V.

White as my vessel's sail,
So turned my cheek to pale!

Still as the touch of Death,
So sudden stayed my breath.
Fluttering as frightened bird,
So quick my heart was stirred.
Fierce as the thunder's path,
So leaped my soul in wrath!

VI.

But with a sound, like wild wind's moan,
Deepening as deepens tempest's groan,
Trembled my treasure-house, its door
Opened with clang, as ne'er before,
Out from it gleamed a dazzling light—
Wondrous and overwhelming sight!

VII.

And while I stood and quivered o'er, from out the
portal came
A maiden clad in spotless white, with heart of liv-
ing flame.

Pure, innocent, majestic, her bright radiance round
me shone,
When suddenly I saw her face,—the features were
my own!

Myself, yet not myself she seemed, as though you
bent to look
At your reflection cast below in rapid, turbid
brook;
The one is like the other, yet, one dim, one bright,
in sooth,—
I was the clouded image, she the glorious living
truth.

I felt it. In an instant flashed this thought upon
my brain:
Down from his heights man scans himself with
sorrow and with pain.

He thinks that he is the grotesque he sees within
the brook—

With envy, awe, and pity, too, it up to him must
look.

She gazed on me—a sudden thrill of pride and
wonder, blent

With joy and deep humility, was through my being
sent.

My voice was hushed, but right to speak made
e'en my whisper bold,

And, "Soul," I said, "I know thee now—the veil
has been uprolled."

"Now come, thy treasure-house explore," in gentlest
tones she said;

I wondering trod the shining track which followed
where she led.

Light trembled round her footsteps, gleamed from
out her waving hair,
Her trailing robes of whiteness shed a glory every-
where.

And as she went, it seemed in joy, deep vault-
doors open flew,
And glittering heaps and matchless gems appeared
in dazzling view.
Stilled, trembling at the sight, her voice like softest
music came,
“’Tis thine, but not all thine, if thou wouldst
merit woman’s name—

“It must be shared. And hadst thou turned in
pride from me to-day,
This treasure-house, with all its stores, had crum-
bled fast away.

Instead of this strong fortress filled with more
than monarch's gold,
A ruined heap, with stubble piled, had lain 'mid
damp and mould.

"Thou shudderest! I mean thou shalt. Though
mildly beam mine eye
On thee, if true, an angel with a two-edged sword
am I!
And I can smite with lightning if thou scornest
my behest,—
Though softly I can nestle as sweet babe on
mother's breast.

"Thy Soul felt terror lest thou should deny her
ruling power,
And then thy tenderness had fled, and all thy
woman's dower.

Yet one last only hope was hers that, through the
flesh-disguise,
She in her glory might appear before thy scale-
freed eyes.

“And now less beautiful I seem, because the
earthly pall
Is closing o’er me once again, but ere its shroud-
ings fall,
Entwine thine arms around me thus, and take me
to thy breast,
And I shall still abide with thee, an ever-present
guest.”

Close-clasped we stood, and then—can heaven a
higher bliss afford?—
New blood, new life, new breath, new hope seemed
through my being poured.



My eyes reflected hers, my heart in flame from
hers outburst,
My workday serge her white robes hid, another
self I nursed.

As awed the chaff-glumes sure must be that, hid
within them, hold,
Though worthless they, the form alike, the grains
of precious gold,
So purer grew the air I breathed, and holy ground
I trod—
I held, had seen, the living saint, who one day
should see God!

VIII.

I felt my spirit see,
Out from the sand,
Swiftly my argosy
Nearing the land.

I felt my spirit twine
Out o'er the wave
Round one, as wreathing vine,—
One good and brave.

I felt my spirit's voice
Out flow in song,
Singing, Rejoice, rejoice!
Comes he ere long.

IX.

Like the tender trilling
Of enraptured birds,
Felt my heart's glad thrilling
At my Soul's sweet words:

“Oh, my bonny lady,
Gayly, blithely sing!
All things now are ready
To receive your king.

“ You have found the treasures
Which your heart doth hold,
Purchase choicest pleasures
For him with its gold.

“ From the cold world hidden
Let your board be spread,
Where the one guest bidden
Comes to break its bread.

“ Wearied from the billow
Welcome him to rest,
Let his downy pillow
Be your loyal breast.

“ He for grace will pray you,
At your feet cast down ;
Bid him rise then may you,
King to take his crown.”

x.

The world's gold is aye cold,
To cold gold speaks again;
But heart's gold, in young, old,
Glows e'er, 'mid joy or pain.

For world's gold is food sold,
And it may spread a feast;
But heart's gold doth cheer hold
Enough with fare the least.

The world's gold throws rich fold
Of fabric o'er the form;
But heart's gold sends unrolled
A mantle ever warm.

The world's gold, to enfold,
Soft spreads a couch for sleep;

But heart's gold doth untold
Refreshment ever keep.

The world's gold has been doled
To me in scanty store ;
But heart's gold my knight bold
Shall have for evermore.

XI.

I see her, I see her!
Like snow are her sails!
She has weathered the billows
And conquered the gales!

'Tis coming, 'tis coming !
My leaping heart knows !
When we scent the rich perfume
We look for the rose.

'Tis nearer, 'tis nearer!

My heart's strangely stirred!
When we hear the sweet music
We look for the bird.

And nearer, and nearer!

Heart, why so fast beat?
Overwhelming, like grape-blooms,
Love staggers—so sweet!

I see him, I see him!

Heart, why these alarms?
He has weathered the billows
To rest in my arms.

XII.

Why should I weep? The rain has tears let fall;
The cruel rain that swept away my all.

Why should I writhe? The waves still surging
keep;

The cruel waves that dragged her down the deep.

Why should I mourn? The blast enough has
sobbed;

The cruel blast that my soul-mansion robbed.

Why should I moan? The wind enough has
sighed;

The cruel wind that widowed me, no bride.

Let *them* find voice! Enough for me to lie

Silent as are his heart-beats—ah, to die!

XIII.

Forever, forever,

In fathomless deeps,

Lies my argosy foundered,

And there my love sleeps.

Forever, forever,

In ruin and cold,

Lies my treasure-house fallen,
And buried its gold.

'Twas going, 'twas going!
My heart felt it all.
When the rose is the fullest
We know it must fall.

'Twas failing, 'twas failing!
Yes, heart, thou wert right.
When the bird's song is sweetest
'Twill soon take its flight.

'Twas dying, 'twas dying!
Heart, cease thy complaint,
When the grape-scent is heaviest
We know we must faint.

'Tis ended, 'tis ended!
Heart, break in this moan!

He has sunk 'neath the billows,
And I am alone.

XIV.

When the lily-buds are scattered,
Withered, sink beneath the lake;
When the soft, warm nests are shattered,
As the boughs which bear them break;
When the song stops in its fulness,
As the singer sudden fails;
When the day goes out in dulness,
As the gray its crimson veils,—

Think you not the lily-voices
Sing the hidden whiteness lent,
And the broken nest rejoices
That it knew what quick life meant?
Tenderly the faltering singer
Dwells upon the finished strain;

And the day in gold will linger,
Though 'tis masked with clouds and rain.

xv.

My daily life is lonely,
Small joys, large cares are mine,
But I have felt the only
Earth-touch that is divine.
My heart has ceased complaining,
My weariness finds rest,
For I have, e'er remaining,
An angel as my guest.
I feel her arms close-clinging,
Caresses ever sweet,
I hear her soft voice singing
Wherever tread my feet.
I know her robes of whiteness
Beneath my world's dress fall,
And her celestial brightness
Sends beauty over all.

My common ways are holy,
So by her presence made;
Pursuits, both grand and lowly,
Receive her glorious aid.
And each day seem I nearer
To heaven, that safely keeps
My loved one, growing dearer
Forever, though he sleeps.
Yes, whelming was my sorrow
When Love came but to go;
Yet pain I dare not borrow,
Small room have I for woe,—
For, in that day of glory,
I saw my Soul alone,
And learned the heavenly story,—
The Soul and Love are one.

XVI.

So, like lily-buds I cherish
Hidden whiteness in my breast;

And the thought can never perish
Of warm, quick life held, like nest.
And the song I never finished
Floods my heart with melody;
And my day whose light diminished
Left a glory here with me.

And my Soul is ever singing,—
Though, I think, her face has grown,
As more heavenly light 'tis flinging,
More like his, less like mine own.
For his head is ever lying
In sweet image on her breast,
Eyes and heart, in love undying,
Hold him as their constant guest.

Like a golden chain they hold him,
Crystal cavern, safely keep;
Like a crimson cloud enfold him,
Sea of glory, hide him deep.

So she still is singing ever,—
Sweeter, sweeter grows her song,
For she knows the glad forever
Dawns its welcoming ere long.

THE CAVERNS OF LURAY.

I.

The Entrance.

BE still, O quaking heart! The guide before
Will lead me through that yawning cavern-door;
Each step, untried by me, is known to him
Who first explored the passage dark and dim.
So Thou, dear Lord, wilt guide me through the
gloom
That meets me, shrinking at the awful tomb!

II.

Invocation to the World.

Come, proud World, thy history read!

Come, for here are shown

Types of every age and deed

Stamped in speaking stone!

Once did God's own fingers write

On rock-tables law?—

Not alone on Sinai's height

Man Jehovah saw!

III.

Apostrophe to the Caverns.

Soundless depth and scaleless height,

Fearful black and blinding white!

And what more? Ah, who can tell?

Light, height, heaven!—dark, depth, hell!

IV.

Address to the Cave, Poetry and Art.

What, O Cave, is most like thee?
Boundless realm of Poesy,
Thronged with images so fair,
Veiled in shades from Day's rude glare.
Poetry, give place to Art,
She must claim a sister's part.
Every shape that man e'er knew,
Here the model first she drew;
Here she stored the rare surprise,
Once too rare for mortal eyes!

V.

To Music.

Music, all thy chords are mute,
But a sound may turn to light;

My rapt heart will thrill as lute,
Draw its ecstasy from sight.
Ghostly shadows chill my blood,
Trembling like a minor wail;
Columns soar, like anthem's flood,
While my tear-wet cheeks grow pale.

VI.

To the Human Heart.

Most, perhaps, like my poor heart,
Greater than I know;
Hiding, from the throng apart,
Worlds of joy or woe.
Robes and crowns and graves and pits—
Dare I speak of more?
Hush! It God alone befits
Soul-caves to explore!

VII.

To Life and Death.

Life, see palaces and halls,
Fit for royal state;
Death, see shrouds within their walls,
Mockery of fate.
Life, see chambers, ball-rooms, baths,
Hints of banquetings;
Death, see sumptuous cenotaphs,
Sepulchres for kings.

VIII.

To Fancy.

Fancy, did I hear thy song?
Weak are notes of mine;
Realms of loveliness belong
But to thee and thine.

I will listen to thy lay,
Heed each word thou hast to say—
Sing, the Caverns of Luray!

IX.

Fancy's Song.

When fairies were banished
From Eden's bright bowers,
Before they had vanished
They plucked all the flowers
With lily-white petals,
With veinings of red,
All glittering metals
From earth's deepest bed,
All snow from the mountains,
All pearls from the sea,
All spray from the fountains,
And brought them to me.

Sweet Fancy, oh, make us,
They said, A new home
Where men cannot wake us,
And saints cannot come.
Unearthly in glory,
Transcendently fair,
Unequalled in story
In all upper air.
The gnomes here shall revel
In endless delight.
Nor angel nor devil
Intrude on their sight.

Here gardens shall flourish,
Unkissed by the breeze;
Lost babes that we nourish
To statues shall freeze.
The pure Sleeping Beauty
Shall here find her rest;

The Prince, bound by duty,
Set out on his quest.
Our Queen's love, a mortal,
We safely shall hide,
Lest, passing the portal,
He leave his fay-bride.

X.

The Cave's History.

They spoke; she wrought. Now, all complete,
A thousand wondrous fabrics stand;
But elves have gone,—for mortal feet
Have found their way to Fairyland.

XI.

Address to Love.

Why so silent, Love,
Mightier than Death,
Heart of God above,
Quick with human breath?



Love's Song.

All my sense is drowned
In a rapture-sea!
I, a king, am crowned
With new royalty.
As that pillar pure
Shines through gloom and mocks
Darkness—as endure
Those eternal rocks:
So my life is told,
So my changeless truth—
All the world is old,
Here, eternal youth!

Shafts, like crystal spires
Strive to reach the dome;
Lambent, icy fires
Meet them as they come:

So Love's heart ascends,
Paradise begun—
Earth with heaven blends—
Earth and heaven are one!

XII.

To Faith.

Faith, oh, tell me, can thine eyes
Pierce through earthly shrouds?
And do radiant visions rise
Where before were clouds?

Faith's Reply.

Yes—a goodly company,
Clad in spotless white,
Symbolled immortality,
Meets my raptured sight.

Temples built by God's own hands!—
Harps and wings and palms!—

Domes which countless conquering bands
Well might fill with psalms.
Ah! if light of heavenly tint
Through these marvels shone,
They the Lamb-lit streets might hint,
Or the great white throne!

XIII.

Conclusion.

Be still, O quaking heart! when comes my doom,
And I must pass the portals of the tomb,
A wondrous vision, grander than to-day's,
Perhaps will burst upon my raptured gaze!
Then let me, Lord, walk closely by Thy side,
As bravely as I follow now my guide!

THE WILD GRAPE-VINE.

O MARY, darling, yes, I know, I know!

I know thy precious heart is stricken sore—
I know thy sun, which rose in crimson glow,
Has set in clouds to rise again no more.

And thou art still a child in weight of years,
But, ah, my soul!—so old in weight of woe!
Dear sweet, thy burden will not fall till tears,
Like swollen winter torrents, rush and flow.

Weep on, dear lamb, and let thy head recline
Above thine image on my faithful breast—
Would God some weak though potent word of mine
Could give thee—no, not joy, but quiet rest.

Here, when a child, like blue hepaticas,
Have I gazed down into thy tender eyes;
Here, bright 's the gold-rod sceptre Autumn has,
Oft have I held thy head, a glittering prize.

And didst thou think, dear maid, thy beauteous veil
Thrown o'er a spirit rare and pure as dew,
With its rich broidery of snow-drift's pale
And sunset's red and gold, were all I knew?

I, who have seen the masking brown uncloset
And show the pearls in lilies set apart;
I, who have seen unfold the blushing rose,
Displaying golden treasures in its heart;

I, who have seen the filmy fern's green curl
Outspread in plummy banners on the breeze;
I, who have seen the quivering leaves unfurl,
To tell of thrilling broods beneath the trees?

Yes, dear, I knew. I know when eyes grow deep
It is because of other eyes enshrined;
Yes, and I know that hearts no longer sleep
When they for worship flaming altars find.

Sob, dear! 'Tis well! I know when eyes grow full
It is because o'erflooded with their tears;
(Soft! God shall wipe them!) and when hearts
grow dull
That ashes cold must fill the hearths for years.

Dear, I have seen the lily's pearls turn brown,
As dark as were the calyces of old;
Sweet, I have seen upon the rose-leaves blown
Worms crawling thick, to fatten on the gold.

Pride, I have seen the fern's soft tender curl
Shrivelled away into a thread decayed;
Love, I have seen the blasted leaves awlirl
A dead brood o'er, 'mid wrecks the storm had
made.

Forgive me, precious! Would I wound for naught?
Would I be kind or true to mock at woe?
Could I be fit to soothe thee, if I sought
To gild a sword more sharp than death, I know?

Then weep thy fill. And come, come closer, dear,
My child of love,—I ne'er had one of blood,—
And now my simple story thou wilt hear,
Perchance—'tis of a tree within a wood.

I loved it when 'twas but a sapling small,
As straight and slender as a winsome maid;
I loved it when its swelling arches tall
Spread o'er the moss beneath a softening shade

Of all the trees that form our woodland bowers,
For spreading grace, for glossy leaves of green,
For rich-hued column, lavish wealth of flowers,
The rare wild-cherry is the forest-queen.

And oft I mused, How like a woman thou!

Above thee smiles kind heav'n, and on thee sheds
Its gentle dews; soft breezes kiss thee now,
And flowery loveliness around thee spreads.

And yet thy peerless beauty is not all—

A shelter strong to tender birds thou art,
And soon a fleecy cloud will o'er thee fall,
And blooming sweetness prove thy wealth of
heart.

But scarce appeared the bloom, like snow as well,
Which wafted overwhelming odorous clouds,
When frowned the skies and blinding torrents fell
And hid all earth and heav'n in leaden shrouds.

I must be faithful. Oft a stroke must fall.

From heav'n, before so kind, a glittering dart
Crashed through the quivering branches, scathed
them all—

The fair young tree was stricken to the heart!

Its tender verdure, shrivelled, dropped to dust;
Its filmy blossoms, scorched, to ashes fell;
All scarred and blackened, as from fiery lust,
It seemed a trophy plucked from flaming hell!

What terror! Yet no less o'erwhelms the soul
Of her, who in her youth and beauty's power—
(While heav'n smiles o'er her, round her softly roll
The thrilling joys of each enchanting hour,

And to her sheltering, open heart appeals
All innocent and tender, round her feet
Rare beauty springs, and in her veins she feels
A wondrous hint of coming bliss complete—

And then it dawns upon her raptured sense,
And in celestial sweetness vision brings
Of ripened fruitage)—trembles, no defence—
Ah, darling, tears are precious, blessed things!

When they have drained away excess of grief,
Ere time has been for their refilling sure,
I can relate the sequel—'tis but brief,
Yet may it help thee grow more brave and
pure.

Years passed, and once again my wandering feet
Beneath the shelter of the woodland strayed,
My sense was burdened with the perfume sweet
Which trembled, flame-like, 'neath the solemn
shade.

I upward glanced,—I scarce could think it true,
Yet there before me stood the blasted tree;
But o'er its wounds a wreathing grape-vine threw
A tender mantle flowing fair and free.

Again in glossy garniture of green
And mist of odorous blossoming it stood;
Again it lodged the birds and, star-like seen,
About its foot bloomed florets of the wood.
f

Heav'n smiled above it still, and when soft showers
Fell 'mid its branches it could stay their fall;
And promise of ripe fruitage gave its flowers—
A wondrous compensation breathed in all.

Again I mused, How like a woman thou!
Pierced to the heart, the world may know it not,
For veiled in beauty as of old time now,
Thou hast a noble, though a lowlier lot.

A beauty not thine own but given thee,
So that thou shalt no less work out God's will,
He smiles, and breezes, joylike, ripple free,
And loveliness is blooming round thee still.

Still canst thou hold the weak and innocent,
And if less fair than thine the borrowed flower,
Far sweeter fruit than thine had been, though lent,
Shall be to thee a rich and royal dower.

Within these mossy walks and fern-fringed aisles,
These thickets where the netted sunbeams fall,
Where brown birds sing, and grass, in seeming,
smiles,
Amid the trees thou'rt loveliest of all.

Yes, darling,—I have done. My words are weak—
Love, mightier than Death, mocks human art;
I cannot, though I fain would comfort speak—
The tree was always stricken to the heart!

THE QUEEN AND THE FLOWER.

DEAR, can you form conception how that a queen
might wander
Among her lovely gardens and pleasant woods
and hills,

And know they all were hers, all the trees and
flowers seeming

To listen for her coming, with joyous sighs and
thrills?

The passion-flowers above her would bend to touch
her bosom,

The conquered lilies meekly would rise her
hands to kiss;

Like blessings, climbing-roses shed petal-showers
o'er her;

Because her robe swept by them, the daisies
sway in bliss.

The golden sun in heaven would flush all with
his splendor,

Which upward then reflected would light her
waving hair;

Soft zephyrs from the blossoms would steep her
sense in perfume,

All beauty round would heighten because she
lingered there.

And now, suppose she stands where, in wild and
rugged sweetness,

Like opal-tinted censer, a brier-blossom hides;
Forgets she all around her, drops all her hands
have gathered,

Upon her heart to nestle desires naught else
besides.

But, ah! 'tis far beyond her, she cannot hope to
grasp it,

E'en the attempt would give her but bleeding
hands and torn;

The simple flower mocks her; for queenly fingers
never

Were meant to reach in thickets 'mid sharp and
tangled thorn.

What cares she now for castles, for hills, for lawns,
for forests,

For burning-hearted gardens, for trees of wav-
ing green?

They're hers, indeed, they own her—but sover-
eignty, what is it,

When just to this sweet-brier alone she is not
queen?

Ah! if I were a queen in the world of highest beauty,
A kingdom I had conquered by my God-given
power,

And gained from men true praise, from women
love and worship,

What could I lack? Why, nothing,—just noth-
ing but—*that flower.*

Oh, yes! Though every nation should speak my
name with gladness,

For noble words and actions immortal I should
be—

As naught were glittering honors and fadeless
wreaths and plaudits,
If *one heart*, true and precious, for sovereign
owned not me.

CORN SONG.

WHY do you nod so gayly toward me,
Corn, won't you tell me—whom do you see?
Is it my Clara, dainty and fair?
Like your own silk, so flossy her hair.
Why do you toss your tassel so free?
Corn, you are graceful—so, too, is she.
Why do you wave your leaves on the air,
Like the green ribbon that floats from her hair?

Corn, do you think I never was told
What you have hidden, fold over fold?

Do you not know that Clara's rare heart
Hides from the world its treasures apart?
Corn, you may think your glumes tightly rolled,—
Can I not guess they cover your gold?
You—I mean Clara—scarcely need start
If, ere October, I read your whole heart!

PRAYER.

WHY should I pray for one I love?
Can God my faint petitions hear?
He sits enthroned so far above,
How can He care whom I hold dear?

Poor heart, we all have asked the same,
All we who love have felt as faint;
God seems a vague, mysterious name—
A *name* can hear no soul's sad plaint.

They tell me some are God's own saints,
Far more like Him than such as we;
So holy, that from earthly taints
They are for evermore set free.

These speak of peace and inward joy,
That lift the soul above all sin:
No pains, no cares, no doubts annoy
Him whom the Spirit dwells within.

Ah, me! You ask, Does heav'nly grace,
From one who has to grief succumbed,
A spirit-chloroform, efface
All pain, and leave the soul benumbed?

Soul's, body's stupefaction spurned
One Holy, 'mid the depths of woe!
But can you find Him?—you have turned
To those who bear His name below.

To God, they say, their hearts aspire,
As birds would pierce the ether blue;
Poor, trembling soul, of them inquire—
What would they say to such as you?

Say? Glibly Holy Writ expound
To your rebellious heart so hard,
Like piety-machines, just wound
To grind out gospel by the yard!

Machines that Christ's own words click out,
As every one were marked with steel;
Each budding hope clip off as doubt,
And crush it with an iron wheel.

These like our God!—are these His saints?
Ah, then, indeed, we weep alone!
If God is higher still, our plaints
Can never reach His ears of stone.

Why comfort on the heights e'er seek?

Far better faint in vale below;

The sunlight-glory gilded peak

Is only made of rocks and snow!

Cease, then, your prayers—God cannot bless

Your loved one, and your prayers are vain,

If, nearing God, you love the less

As human, quick to joy or pain.

Love as the human loves, and weep,

Too, as the human drops a tear;

Sing while you toil, smile while you sleep—

This is the prayer that God can hear.

'Tis not the heav'n-aspiring peak

That tells me all my heart would know;

The clouds beneath far better speak

His presence in the vale below.

The vale, whence dewy vapors soar
To fill those clouds with hoarded showers—
The self-same dews, so faint before,
Revive, in rain, a thousand flowers!

Then pray—your prayers, though weak they be,
God gathers as the cloud the dew;
Transmutes, to fall as blessings free,
And gladden one you love and you.

All we who love may with you pray,
And, through these treasured prayers of ours,
All earth be wreathed in bloom, like May—
That bloom, sad hearts, revived like flowers.

REMONSTRANCE.

WITH A SPRAY OF TRAILING-ARBUTUS.

To you this dainty, fragrant spray
But simple spring-time bloom may be;
Would I could find fit words to say
All that its beauty says to me!

Forgive me, if I cannot reach
The peak on which your spirit dwells;
The dews, and not the glaciers, teach
Those who cull flowers in shady dells.

You pray to God enthroned in light,
Majestic name, all names above;
Perhaps I do not pray aright,
I only bless the hearts I love.

My God is very low, you say,
Yours dwells in wondrous heights sublime ;
The blossoms speak of sure decay,
And nature, but revenge for crime.

I listen,—and I might believe,
But through these floral lips a voice
Soft whispers, tells me I deceive
My heart, if blooms say not, “ Rejoice ! ”

I want no higher God than He
Who bade the lilies tell His power ;
Prayer-mists and blessing-rains, to me
Make every thirsting soul a flower.

With petal-mouths our own woods say,
While fields and meadows swell the chord :
The ancient glaciers here gave way
To leave a garden for the Lord !

Dear prophet, take the poet's word—

Say, Flowers shall smile where ice has lain!

Their dewy breath be prayer—'tis heard

When God sends down a blessing-rain!

Say not, Bloom means disease, decay,

Or say it of my eyes and cheek:

A corolla or face, one way

God paints, of life not death to speak.

Say not, Analogies will fail—

God may have left for prayers of ours

Provision, as for mists from vale,

The means of blossom-freshening showers.

If I from this low vale could reach

And touch your hand upon the peak,

This spray would be my gift—all speech

Of mine were vain, for it would speak.

TRUST.

YOUTH-SPRING into man-summer sped,
Cried, Life only wearies, deceives!
Trust faded away, as the red
And yellow fade out of the leaves.

Man-summer, now age-autumn, said,
Life, gain for all losses, receives.
And trust came again, as the red
And yellow come back to the leaves.

SONG.

VIOLET-EYES in the grass,
Souls of my true love's eyes,
Thoughts of her, as I pass,
Up from your purple rise.

Petal-lips on the trees,
Shades of my true love's lips,
Smiles like hers, on the breeze,
Float from your crimson tips.

SONG.

THE wind through the harp-chords swept,
As they were a barrier strong;
But sighed, as though sad Love wept,
And died in a thrilling song.

My soul, through its prison-bars,
Would dash like the tempest strong;
But sighs, 'neath the fatal stars,
And dies in a plaintive song!



WINGS AND SONG.

O BIRD on the spray,—fly, fly not away!
Your head's nodding crest, your crimson-hued
 breast,
Your plumage so bright, appeal to my sight—
Your small, dainty feet, so tapering, so neat—
O bird, I would paint you—stay, stay your flight!
But birds will not stay—they fly swift away!—
His gold-gleaming crown might be sombre brown
For all I can paint, as soaring he sings,—
And, seen in the distance, a bird is all wings!

Come back to the spray—O bird with me stay!—
Sweet bird, can you teach your magic of speech?

My heart strangely thrills, while ripple your
trills!—

O music of birds, could I learn your words,
The world I would tell how God's love o'erfills!
But birds will not stay—they fly swift away!—
His words and his note one blended strain float,
And all I can learn, as soars he along,
Is, heard in the distance, a bird is all song!

O cloud-heaven's day—my bird fades away!—
Tongue's charm to express—face, form, earthly
dress

Have faded in flight from hearing and sight!—
O world, say of me, when I float as free—
Say, Spirit and soul are music and flight!
In heaven's full day, as I fade away,
My spirit-song hear, my soul-flight see clear,—
Say, Soul still aspires!—say, Spirit still sings!—
As birds in the distance are songs and are
wings!

OUR NUMERATION.

IN our twenties—and the blossoms
 Drifted by in fragrant snow;
Skies were blue, and we together
 Chose the path that we should go.
Violets bloomed and grasses nodded,
 Springing by our lingering feet;
And we laughed and kissed each other,
 Singing gayly, "Life is sweet!"

In our thirties—crimson berries
 Blushed 'neath emerald banners bright;
Royal orchids veiled their purple
 From the careless seeker's sight.
Solemn forest shades above us
 Both our voices strangely stilled;

But we closer drew together,
Hands with sylvan treasures filled.

In our sixties—open meadows
Now beguile our wandering feet;
Memory's orchids, forests, blossoms,
Fields and clouds are ever sweet;
But we best love aster's sapphires,
And lobelia's spikes of flame;
While our hearts, like autumn's maples,
Burn and glow, for each, the same.

In our eighties—we have cheated
Frost and fled before the snow;
In a southern clime we're waiting
Till our King shall bid us go.
Resting here, beneath the palm-trees,
By the sweet-breathed myrtles fanned—
'Tis not long, our second spring-time,
'Tis not far, the morning land.

THE STREAM AND THE SONG.

I.

NONE heard the song that sweetly thrilled
And all a poet's heart-depths filled.

'Twas like a hidden woodland spring,
Pure, deep, and gently murmuring

Of when 'twould flow, in silvery tones,
Out to the world of weary ones,

Reviving, gladdening, every day,
New beauty marking all its way.

II.

A fiery drought devoured the spring;
The poet died ere he could sing.

Then, though flowed neither song nor stream,
Were they but as an empty dream?

Look at those wondrous clouds of gold—
They an ephemeral spring now hold.

It will in gentle dews distil,
Its mission silently fulfil.

May not the unsung song, then, be
Heard now in heavenly minstrelsy?

May angels breathe its tenderness
Through aching hearts to teach them peace?

Yes! And the poet knows his voice,
Unheard, made many sad rejoice.

III.

Thence let us draw this inference sweet—
God lays no stones to trip our feet.

Some glad day we may find it true
That we were greater than we knew.

When earnest works unfinished rise
They may be veiled from mortal eyes,

But in transcendent splendor shine,
Completed by a hand Divine.

TRANSITION.

FAREWELL, my youth!

I cast my girlhood's garlands from me now
To take the woman's crown upon my brow.

I press my hands
Where withered roses have so lately been,
All blighted by the fevered brain within.

Go quickly, youth!
With no regrets I see thee fast depart,
Sad time of blasted hopes and breaking heart.

We all have lived
Enough to see life's falsity in youth,
But not enough to know its blessed truth.

Our eyes are clear
Enough to see the crosses in our road,
But we are still too weak to bear the load.

I look not back,
Lest all life seem a mockery. Lord, through tears
Give me true vision for my coming years.

All, all that blooms
Of sweetness for me in this desert land—
Sure, I shall find it by Thy leading hand.

If I may choose,
I ask an opal soul, white, free from sin,
Thy burning glory lighting all within.

SONG.

A SINGLE flower has but few petals,
But she has wealth of heart;
Oh, who for a dead miser's metals
With living gold would part?

A double flower riots in petals,
Absorbed is all her heart;
Oh, who for the world's sordid metals
With love's sweet wealth would part?

HIDDEN TREASURES.

A ROSE was hidden deep in green,
Like birdling in its nest;
Its fragrance spake, itself scarce seen,—
And now 'tis on thy breast.

So hides for thee a heart,—as sweet
Its voice as breath of rose:
Come find this heart—'tis surely meet
To share thy flower's repose!

TO A FERN.

POETS tell us, half in sorrow,
Of sweet music never sung;
But not one regret I borrow—
Deepest heart-songs need no tongue,

And leaves and lives, in quiet beauty growing,
Need no bright flower-crown for perfect showing.

Some souls live in preparation,
Then to brilliant climax rise;
Others, seeming all negation,
Hide their worth from careless eyes;
But, gorgeous bloom or sheltering leaves enfolding,
All seeds are pregnant thoughts, the future holding.

Seeing thee, I do not wonder
That the Celtic poet-mind
Oft, thy filmy plume-tufts under,
Homes of fairy-folk could find;
Or that their code a judgment dire included
For him who on their sanctity intruded.

Or that gods, in myth-tales olden,
Gave their favored ones alone

Sights by mortals un beholden,
Showed them where thy blossoms shone.
Invisible to all, thy magic flower
Kept him unseen who wore one as his dower.

But the human has grown stronger,
At his Father's table fed;
Like the world, a child no longer,
God, not Ceres, gives him bread;
And when his heart toward poet-land is leaning,
Truth's pure, dim spirit-world is now his meaning.

Then, since beauties soon must perish
Which on fleeting fancies rest
(Dew on cobwebs), let us cherish
Loveliness in truth as best.
I lift thy fronds to read my life's whole history—
How thin a veil divides my touch and mystery!

By a sorrel-leaf God's servant
Taught His triune nature well;
Christ Himself, His love pure, fervent,
Did through grass and lilies tell:
So may I say, in humble adoration—
A simple fern may preach the Incarnation!

And the wisest cannot show us
Why God makes or cancels law;
All around, above, below us,
Wonders fail to wake our awe—
If He with unveiled face would smile and love us,
We'd think it common as His sun above us!

Ah! high o'er this fern-bank's waving
FronDED forests grandly rise,
Crystal streams the palm-groves laving—
Eden meets my ravished eyes;
And when my tears shut out that radiant vision,
My soul sings, Fadeless is the land Elysian!

SONNET.

My heart is like a forest-well, I think,
Deep-hid by sylvan shades from dazzling day;
And only thou, my king, canst from it drink,
For to it no one else can find the way.
The sheltering moss has never felt the sink
Of alien steps; and thou, mute voices say,
Art lord of the domain, for round the brink
Memorials of thee fair seasons lay:
Tall, feathery fern recalls thy stately grace;
Arbutus-breath thy conquering lowliness;
Rich orchis thy rare soul of royal race;
Thy pure eyes glow in aster's azure dress.
And o'er the still depths bending, thou canst trace
Within them nothing but thine own sweet face.

THE ROSE AND THE HEART.

THE rose, like a life, a loveliness holds,
And sweeter its breath doth grow ;
But whether to bloom or to blight it unfolds,
The heart is the last to glow.

The rose, like a life, must wither full soon,
And low all its pride be laid ;
But, falling at even, or scorched in the noon,
The heart is the last to fade.

THEN, NOW, AND HEREAFTER.

I.

O CHERISHED heart,
Thou knowest when my spirit drooped in pain,
And gently thou didst bid me hope again.

My wearied soul,
Like gladdened lark, with sudden thrill would rise
And soar to the blue heaven of thine eyes.

Their wondrous light
Seemed like the gold through azure poured at
morn—
And where the singer's lost, the song is born.

And soft the strain,
Or ringing jubilant, the humble bird
Cares only that the skies and sun have heard.

II.

Long years have passed,
And now my soul, like tired lark, doth soar
To warm blue skies and golden sun no more.

Her notes are hushed;
Beside her ruined nest, 'mid leaves and mould,
Alone she cowers in the damp and cold,

But still a song
Is quivering faintly, though her voice is dumb,
And some glad day a flood of joy will come ;

For once again,
Like gladdened lark, my longing soul shall rise
And soar to the blue heaven of thine eyes.

MINOR TO MAJOR.

I AM no sad-voiced singer,
Although my strains be low—
Yet tears are ever filling
The wells of human woe.

I know that desert rovers
Oft thirst for cooling showers ;
I know that Arctic dwellers
Have never seen the flowers.

I know that graves are yawning,
Engulfing heart from heart;
I know that hands are clasping,
While souls are worlds apart.

I think of mothers weeping
Beside their dying ones;
But more of mother-spirits
Who never kissed their sons.

I think of true lives parted
By slander's cruel breath;
But more of chilling silence,
A deeper death than death!

Oh, weary, bitter longings!
Oh, agonizing moan!
Oh, eyes with lips vain-speaking
As ice might speak with stone!



Ah me! the serpent traileth
Forever 'mid our bowers,
And though his sting be vanquished,
The mourning still is ours.

Let those who tell of scourgings
For sins for evermore,
Hear cease the minor wailings,
The song of triumph soar.

Through chords harmonious swelling,
Then throbbing to the skies,
All souls shall change to music,
To joy all tear-filled eyes.

Roll on, O mighty chorus!
In love, all hearts shall blend
Like notes in holy anthem,
Outpouring, without end!

PREMONITION.

I THINK of thee as mine when dawn
Comes flushing all the eastern sky;
I think of thee as mine when morn
Proclaims the glowing sun on high.
For morning means that radiant noon
Will come, a blaze of glory, soon.

I think of thee as mine when fades
The twilight into sheltering night;
I think of thee as mine when shades
Shut out from earth her veil of light.
For evening means that slumber's call
Will bid us cease from labors all.

I think of thee as mine when light
Has spangled all the skies with gold;

I think of thee as mine when night
Her sheltering robe o'er all has rolled.
For night doth mean that blushing morn
Again upon us soon will dawn.

FAITH AND SIGHT.

THE red maple hung out her tassels,
As bright as the ruby's ray;
And said, When you see my pompons
That means, it is almost May.

But the wind blew his loud, shrill trumpet,
And we, with the doubt of youth,
Declared that the flame-robed maple
Paid little regard to truth.

'Till the wind shook away the tassels
To show the green, budding leaves;
And we have grown humbler, wiser—
Faith sees, but she first believes!

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

WHY so spotless, Christmas rose?
Pearly as the winter snows,
You in bleak December gleam,
Snow-flakes pure your petals seem.

Ask you why my blooms are white?
Only change your faith to sight—
Read what every saint believes,
Written out in floral leaves.

Sprung from harsh and poisonous roots,
Borne on rank and bitter shoots,

Yet behold my blossom fair,
Shining through the wintry air.

Would the thoughtless e'er suppose
Hellebore was Christmas rose?
Can the noxious plant afford
Homage to the Christian's Lord?

Will you learn, then, from a flower?
Doubt not our Redeemer's power
From a life, with bitter past,
Perfect bloom to bring at last.

TWO SIGHTS.

THEY saw a maiden without gift or grace;
God saw heav'n-longings in her upturned face.

They saw a feeble hand which empty hung;
God saw how tightly to the Cross it clung.

They saw a life which no life ever blessed;
God saw how closely in His way she pressed.

They saw a still, cold form, o'er which none wept;
God saw the angels watching where she slept.

They saw a lowly grave, unmarked, forgot;
God saw a home for her which changeth not!

We see this daily: dark will be our sight,
As through a glass, till cleared for heav'nly light.

THE TRUMPET CREEPER.

Ho, fairies, come here, I have something to show—
Of all your old music you're tired, I know;
So long you've rung chimes from the hyacinth
bell,
From lilies, campanulas—ah, I know well

That flutes made of wheat-stalks and organs of
reeds

Won't answer a fairy musician's full needs;
So come, elfin orchestra, round by this wall—
I have something here to astonish you all!

A rough, woody vine that escaped being tree,
With finger-like roots climbed the stones, as you
see;

Then threw out green leaflets, all clustered and
veined,

Like victor-palms marking each stage it had
gained,

And then it ran riot, in mimicking bowers,
And laughed out its glee in a thousand bright
flowers.

Ah, fairies, I wonder if that rough vine knew
It ever would bear scarlet trumpets for you!

Play cornets of coral, and carbuncle's glow,
That through your sweet music the glad vine may
know

That we, who enjoy its bright bloom at this time,
Forget not that first came a long, weary climb :
Because we are mindful of all it endured
Ere blossoms of fire from brown bark were en-
sured,

The dear vine will laugh, all the gayer in glee,
With sun-tinted corols for you and for me !

REPUBLICANISM (THREE GEN-
ERATIONS).

First.

SQUIRE CECIL, at his high-arched gate,
Stood with his son and heir ;
Around him spread his rich estate,
Near rose his mansion fair.

And when a neighbor, ragged, sad,
Unlearned, passed that way,
The father turned, and to the lad
These kindly words did say:

“There goes poor Muggins! Ah, my son,
How thankful we should be
That our republic gives a chance
To fellows such as he!”

Third.

Miss Muggins blazed in jewelled light,
And swept in silken sheen;
Her courtiers thought a maid so bright
And beauteous ne'er was seen.
Aloft she held her haughty head,
Surveyed her Paris clothes:
“And I must patronize,” she said,
“Miss Cecil, I suppose.

"She's poor, she teaches, has no style!
In Europe, now—but, oh!
In this republic we're compelled
To meet all kinds, you know!"

IN AN ORCHARD.

THIS tree from its treasures will toss some
To him who lies low at its root—
A shell-tinted flake of fresh blossom,
A coral-streaked moon of ripe fruit.

So Love from her treasures will toss some
To him who waits, scorning pursuit—
A promise as pink as the blossom,
Reality red as the fruit.

VALLEY FORGE ARBUTUS.

GRAND hills! rear your heavenward claim,
Like patriots' noble desire!
Like altars colossal, aflame,
With blue, waving pines for your fire.
Like Liberty's torches, they live
While earth seems one winter-bound tomb,
And shelter, the soonest to give
Defiance to Death, sparks of bloom.

The chief trod these hills—did he think
The sky not above, but below,
When first he saw planets of pink,
With scarce-cleared-away clouds of snow?
Or start, sad forebodings forgot?—
The drooping, or uplifted eye

Can each meet a heaven, for not
Up, down, but to God, is the sky!

Toy trumpets whose mimicry shamed
The almond's and vale-lily's hue,
With star-mouths, whose breath not the famed
Sweet Arabic scents ever knew;
Trailed leaves, like the hero's own bays,
Undying and green evermore—
Hope's message, amid his dark days,
You brought, as to Pilgrims before:

"If buds 'mid dead leaves can survive,
If green can be 'fresh 'mid the snow,
Then Freedom is ever alive,
And still it must blossom and grow."
What else could your perfume-notes say?
God wills that a flower brave the blast—
Can He, then, from man turn away,
Mock hopes the sublimest at last?

The chief, from the hills which his fame
Uphold to the stars and the sun,
Descended, and down the vale came
To where dwelt of women the one.
Why seemed he no longer depressed?
Why scarcely for joy could he speak?
He pinned in the mull o'er her breast
A spray like the tints in her cheek.

How simple the act!—but it meant
A gift from Omnipotent hands.
Who doubts the prophetic event,
Or, reading it, misunderstands?
The hero saw Liberty's bloom
Adorning her altars above,
And brought it to earth's valley-gloom,
And placed on the shrine of his love.

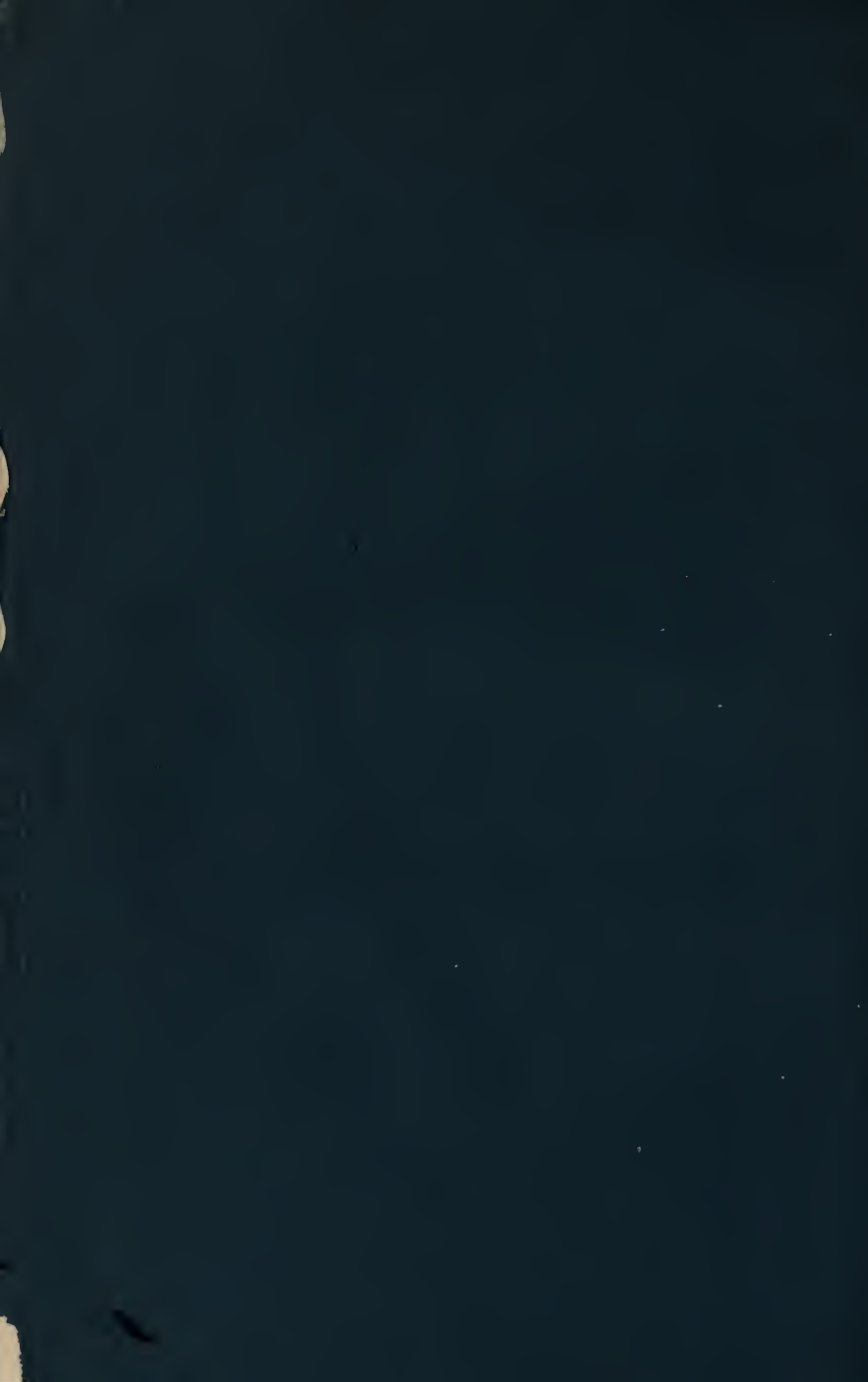
The altars of old were enwreathed
With vervain, most sacred of flowers—

What altars such incense e'er breathed—
And have we no garlands for ours?
These hills speak their choice—we must take—
To give they have best right and power—
The Trailing Arbutus must make
America's national flower!



THE END.





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